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ABSTRACT

Higher Education is charged by its critics with increased irrelevance and continuing inflexibility. Defenders of tradition, on the other hand, often see the university as a shambles of innovation and disorder. The perspective offered by the graphic tables in this document of enrollment trends and patterns over several decades offers some middle ground of truth. The social changes of modern times often outrun the capacity of postsecondary education to adapt; by the same token, colleges, universities and their constituencies have contributed to the balance and continuity that orderly change requires. Enrollment patterns and trends for the Southern states appear to reflect continuing and gradual adaptation of the educational structure to societal needs. It is the responsibility of educators and public policy makers to assure that postsecondary education remains responsive to those changing needs. The graphic presentations include: percent increase in college age population and college enrollment in the South; women as percent of total enrollment in the South; college enrollment growth by race in the South; percent in college by family income levels in the U.S.; enrollment by institutional type in the South; and enrollment percent graduate and undergraduate in the South. (Author/PG)

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Enrollment Trends in the South

Southern Regional Education Board



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Enrollment Trends in the South

**A Report to the
22nd SREB Legislative Work Conference
"The Changing Face of Higher Education"**

**Memphis, Tennessee
August 22-24, 1973**

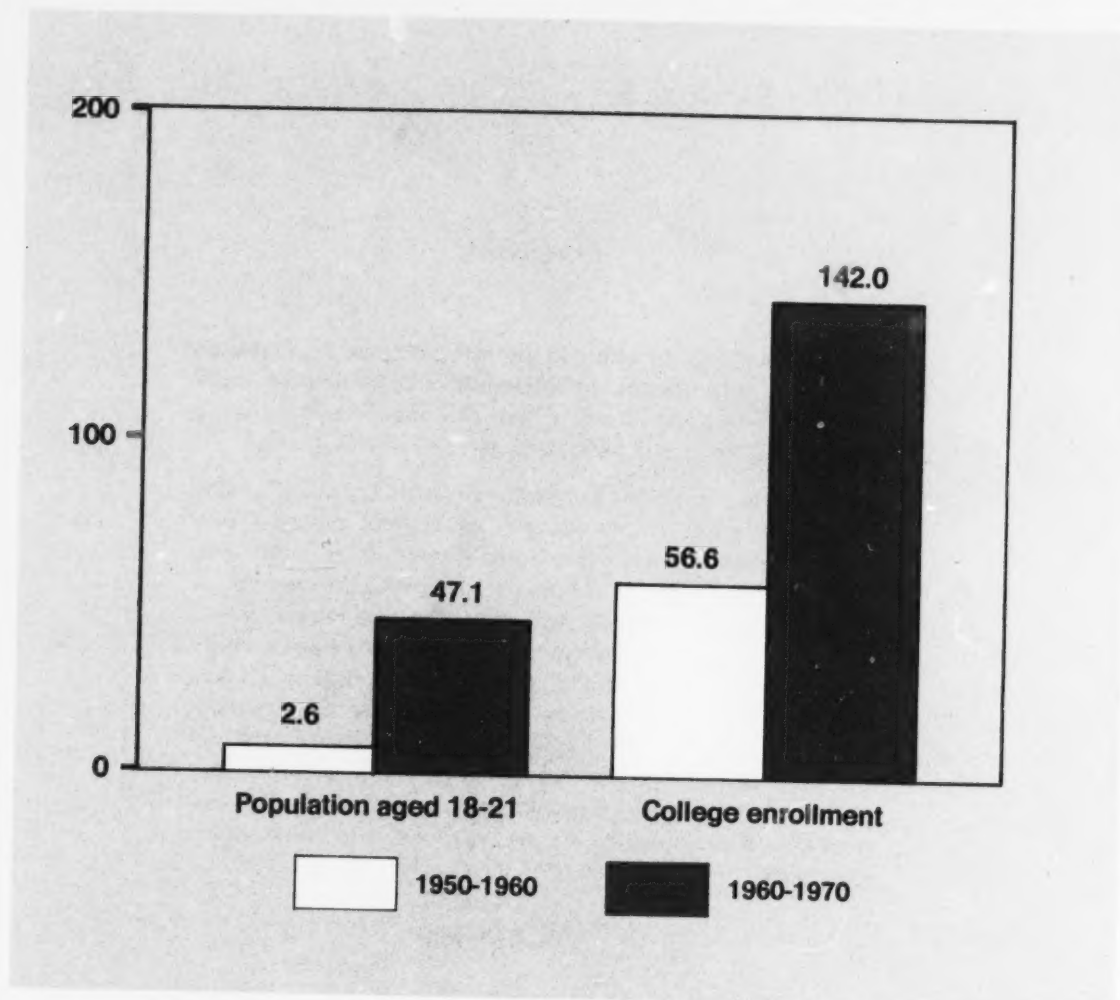
Foreword

Higher education is charged by its critics with increased irrelevance and continuing inflexibility. Defenders of tradition, on the other hand, often see the university as a shambles of innovation and disorder.

What are the facts? The perspective offered by the following graphic synopsis of enrollment trends and patterns over several decades suggests a middle ground of truth. The social changes of modern times often outrun the capacity of postsecondary education to adapt; by the same token, colleges, universities and their constituencies have contributed to the balance and continuity which orderly change requires. Enrollment patterns and trends for the Southern states appear to reflect continuing and gradual adaptation of the educational structure to societal needs. It is the responsibility of educators and public policy makers to assure that postsecondary education remains responsive to those changing needs.

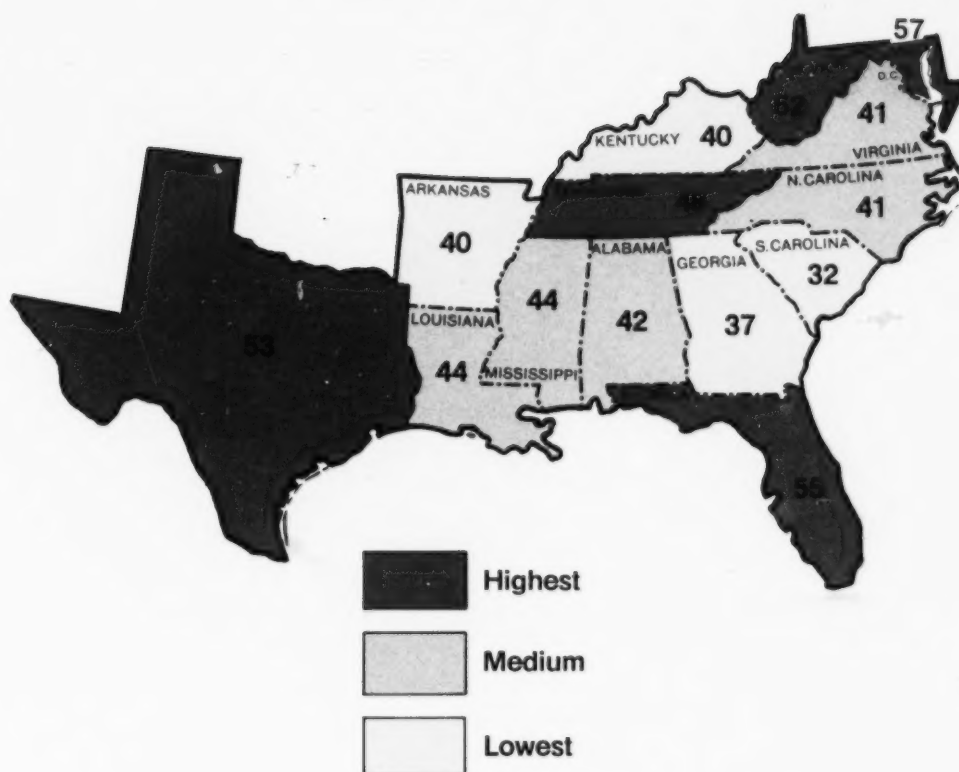
Winfred L. Godwin
President

Percent Increase in College Age Population and College Enrollment, South



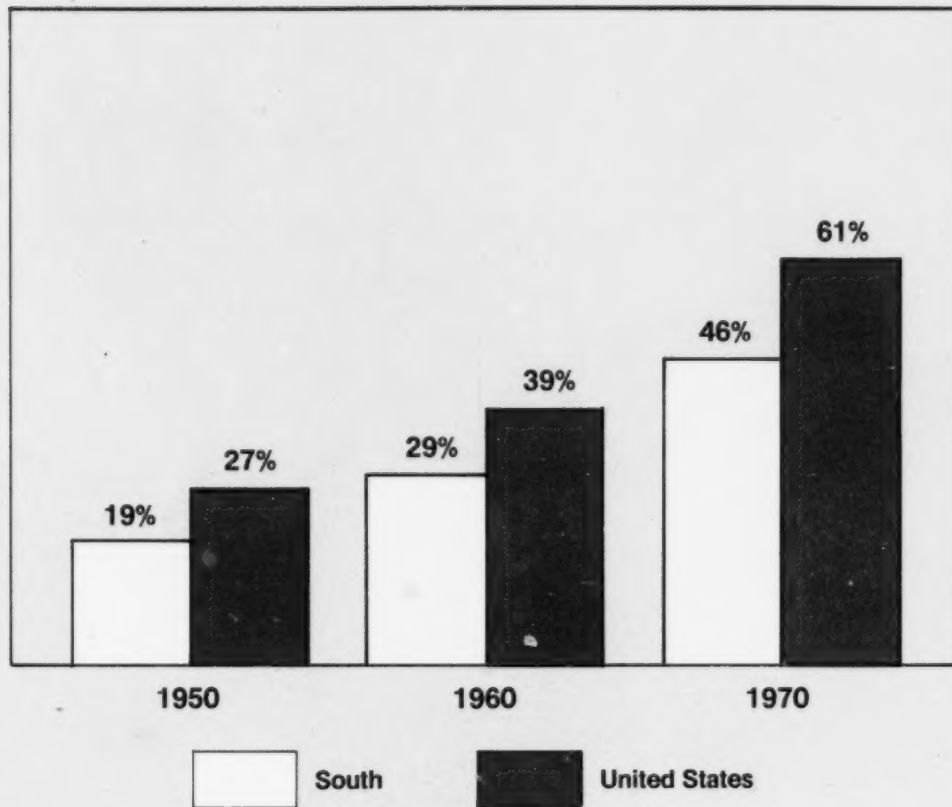
1950 to 1960, a period of almost no increase in college-age population, saw enrollments expand by about one half in the Southern states. In the 60's, on the other hand, the college-age population itself rose by one-half, with enrollments spiralling almost 150 percent.

College Enrollment as a Percent of Population Age 18-21, 1970



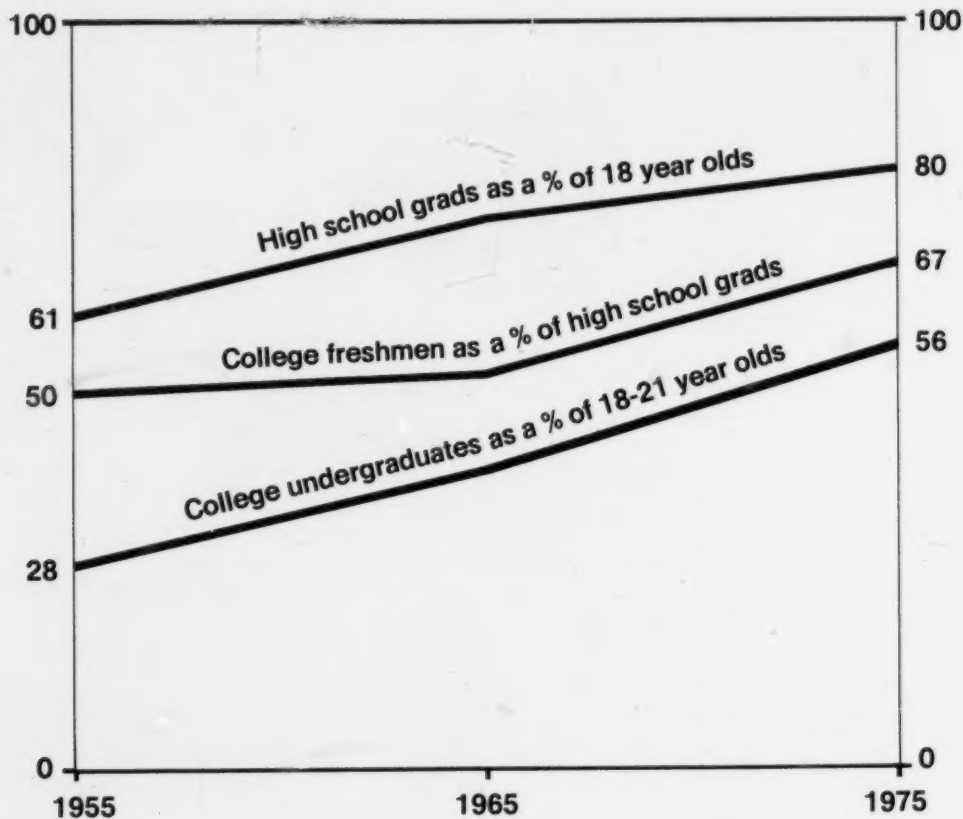
The relation between population and enrollment, expressed in attendance rates showing enrollment as a percent of population, is illustrated by the shaded map. These attendance rates now range from 57 percent in Maryland to 32 percent in South Carolina, compared with 61 percent in the United States.

College Enrollments as a Percent of Population 18-21



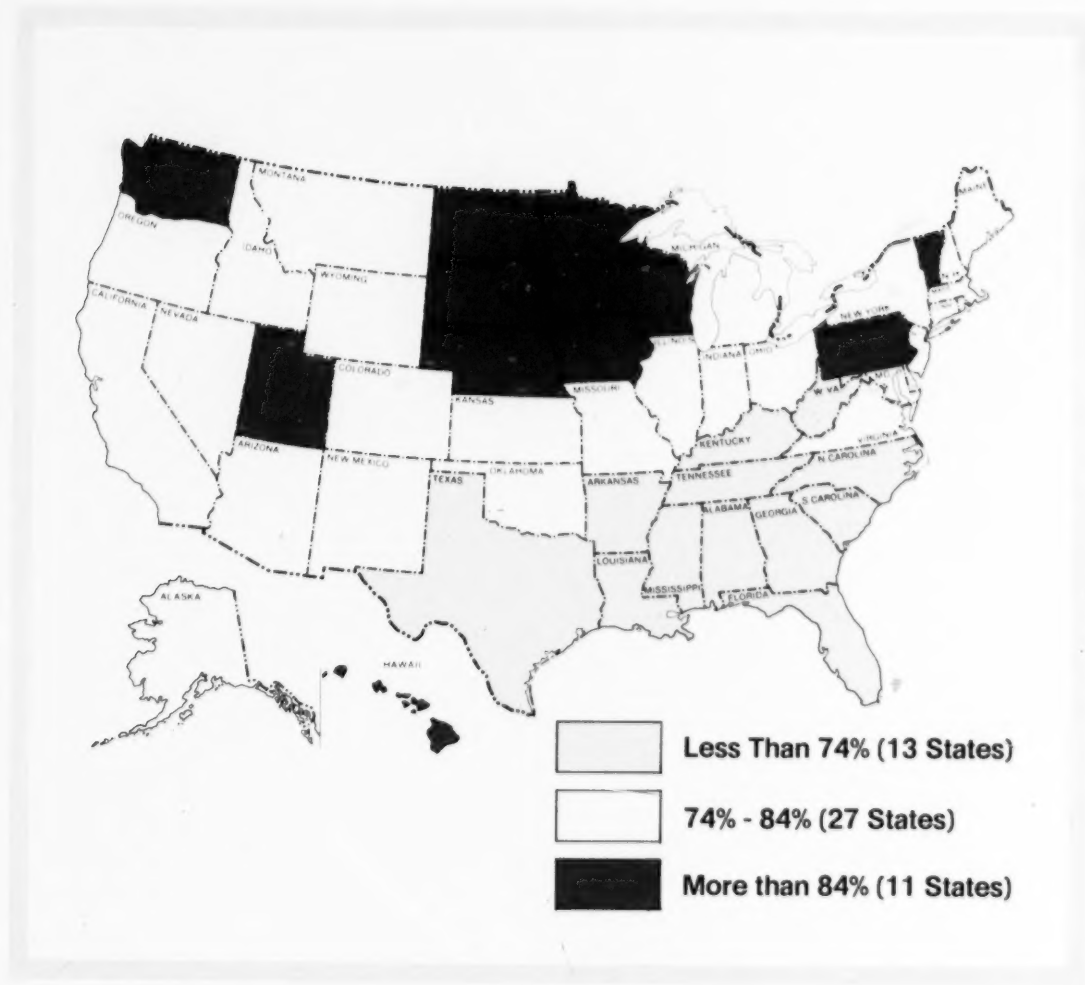
The South and the United States show similar rates of progress but so far no narrowing of the regional gap has occurred and the region still lags 15 percent behind the nation in number of college enrollments as a percent of college-age population.

Selected Educational Attendance Measures, U.S.



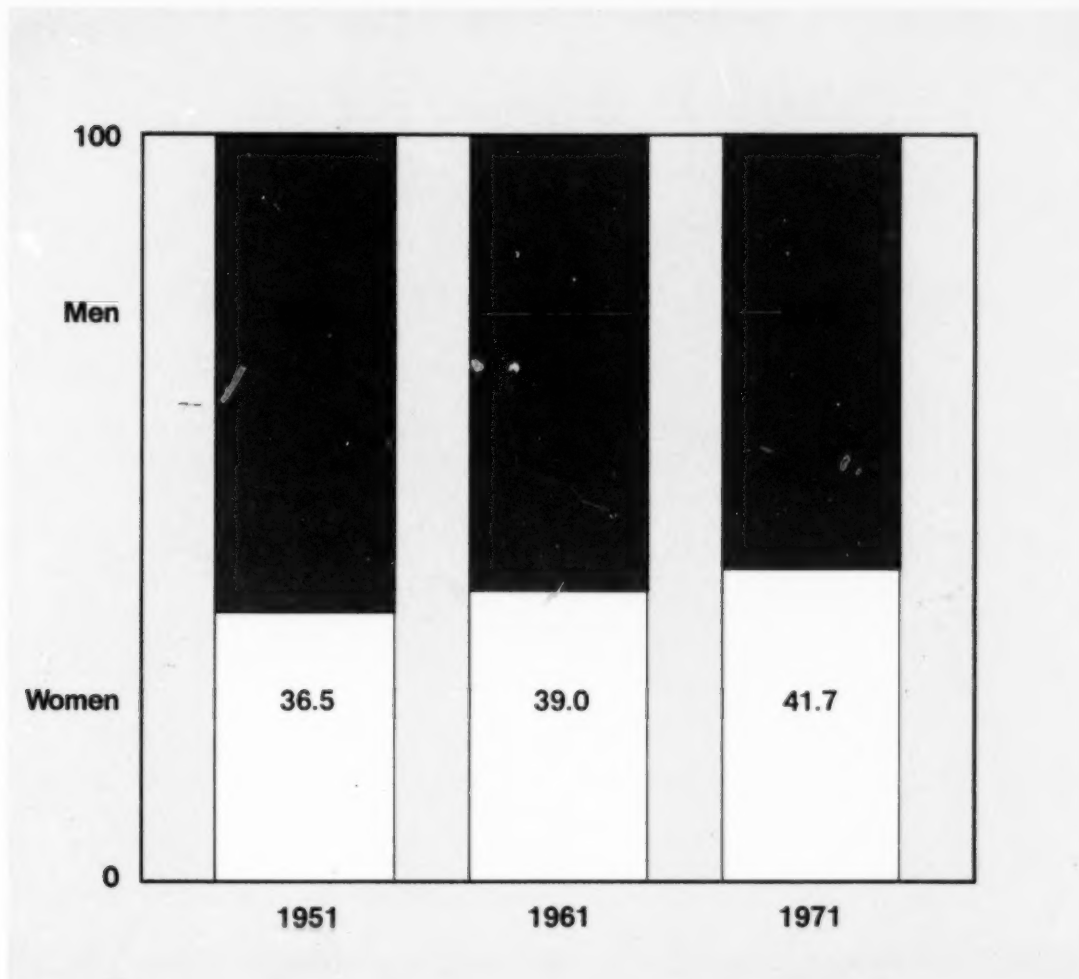
What are some of the factors which account for differences in attendance rates? United States statistics show that 20 years ago undergraduate college attendance in the United States was 28 percent of the 18 to 21 year old population; by now the rate has doubled to 56 percent (lower line). Two factors contributing to this growth are (1) an increase of that part of the population which is eligible to go to college (i.e. percent completing high school) and (2) an increase in the proportion of high school graduates who actually enter and attend college. High school completions have jumped from 61 percent in 1955 to nearly 80 percent by 1973 (upper line). The proportion of these graduates entering college has meanwhile climbed from 50 percent to a level of 67 percent (center line).

U.S. Grads as a Percent of 9th Grade



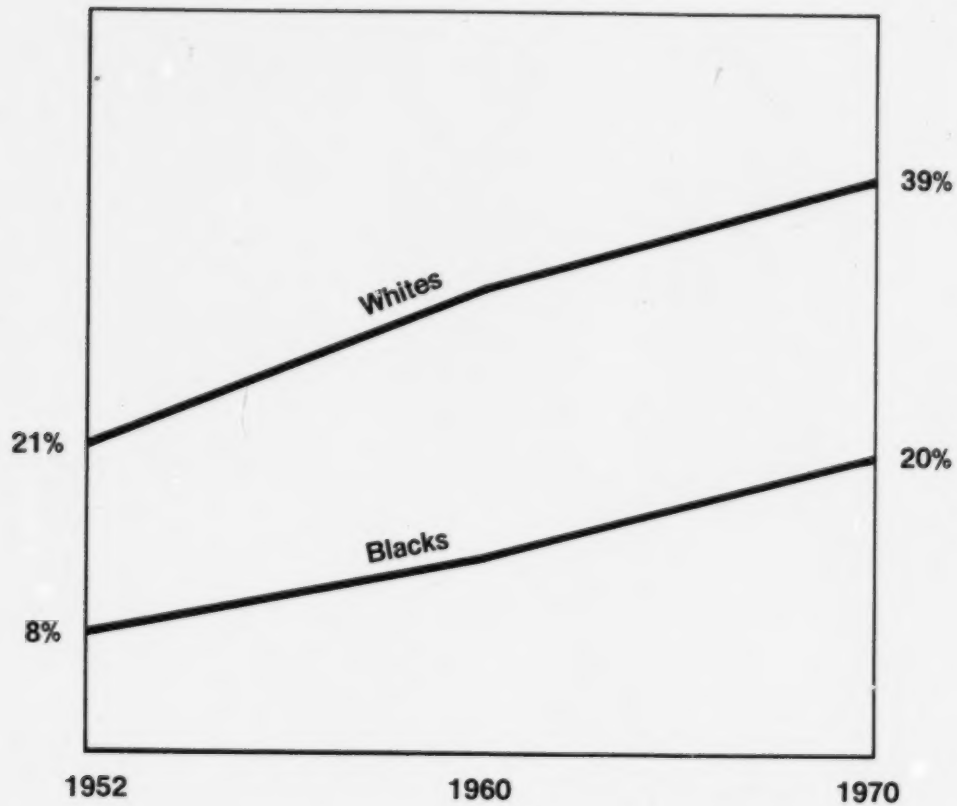
A United States map showing high school completions reveals part of the explanation of the region's lag—only two Southern states have as many ninth graders graduating from high school four years later as does the U.S. as a whole (i.e. 73 percent).

Women as a Percent of Total Enrollment, South



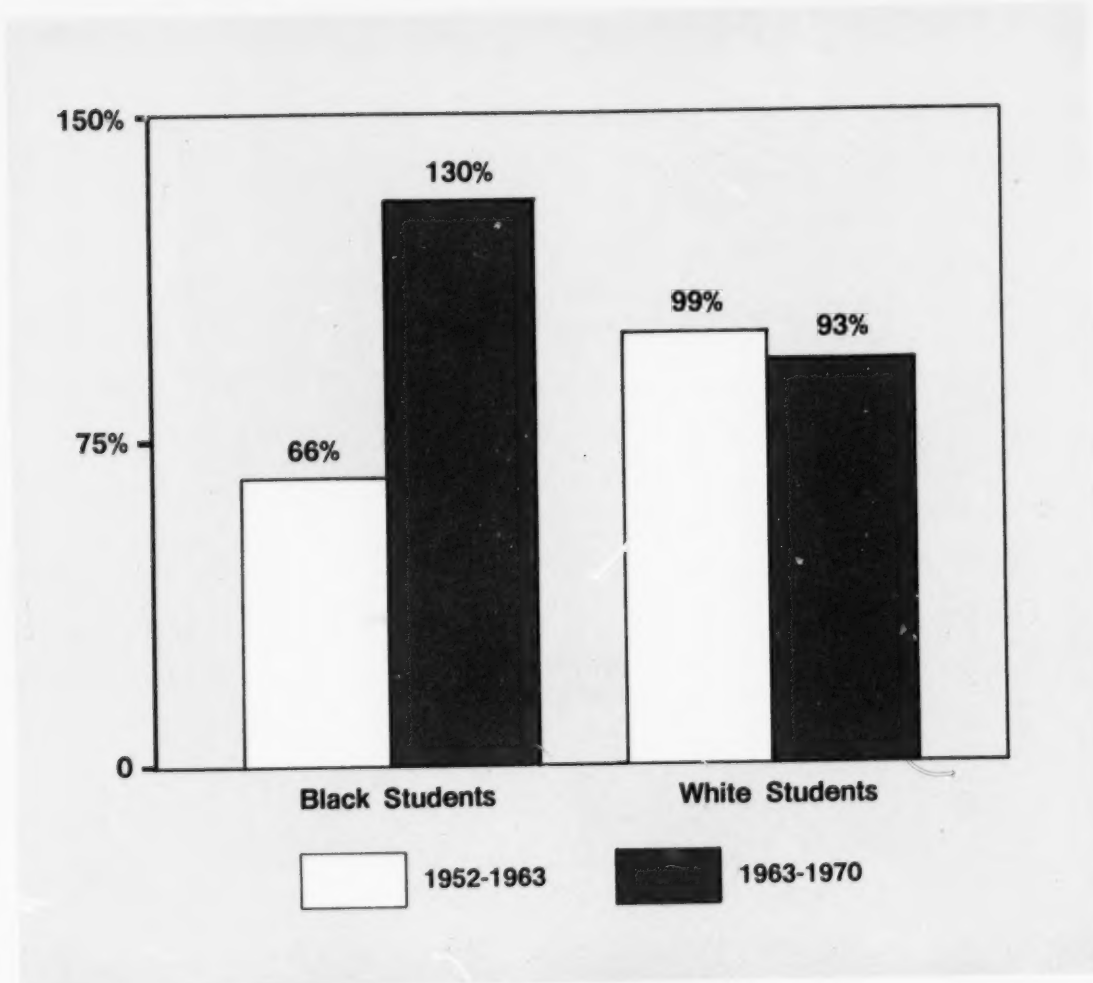
What are some of the ways in which the composition of college enrollments has been changing over these two decades? One shift is in the proportion of males and females. From 37 percent of the total in 1951, women have steadily moved to their present level of 43 percent of Southern college enrollments. These proportions have followed closely the prevailing pattern in the nation.

**College Undergraduate Enrollment as a Percent
of 18-21 Year Old Population, by Race, South**



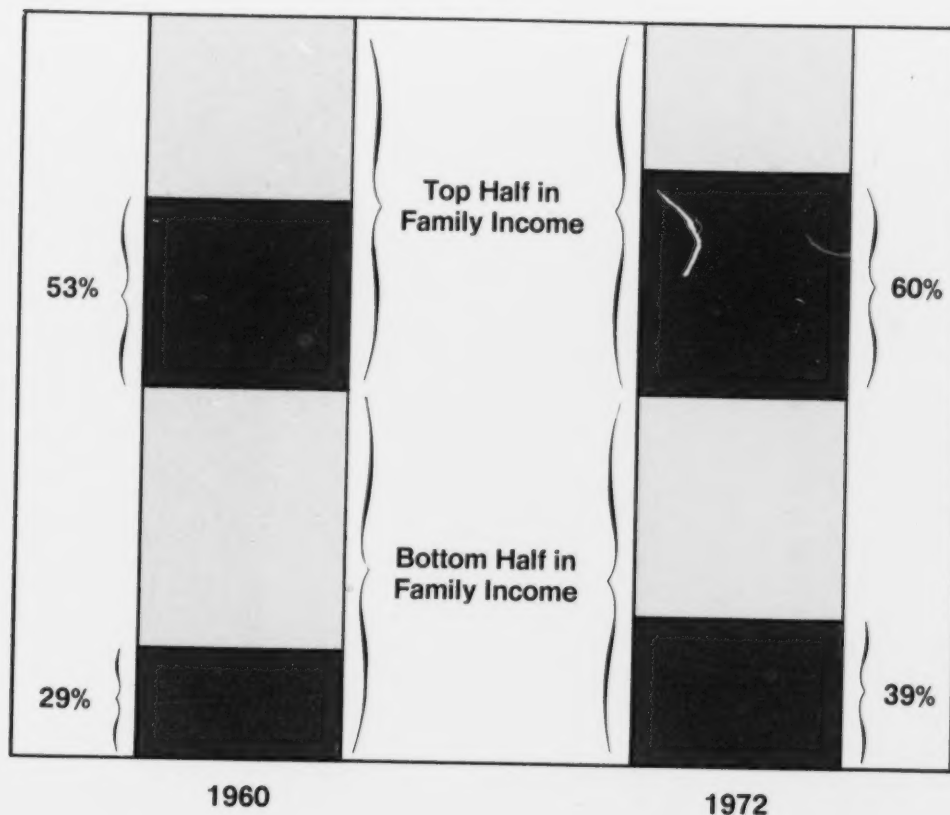
When black undergraduate college enrollment is expressed as a percent of the 18 to 21 year old population, an increase from 8 percent in 1952 to 20 percent in 1970 is observed, compared with the corresponding rates for the white population—21 percent and 39 percent.

College Enrollment Growth By Race, South 1952-63 and 1963-70



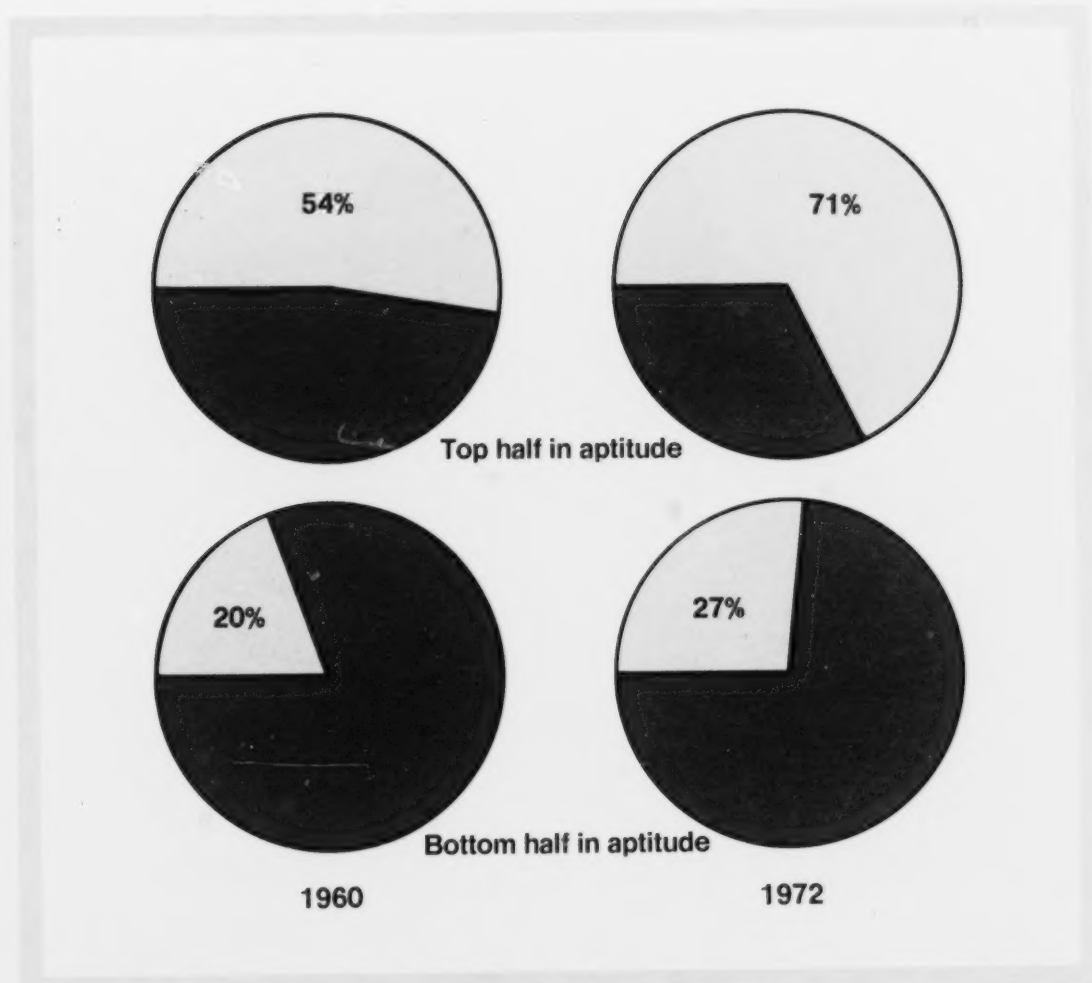
College attendance by blacks has moved upward, but the pattern of change has itself shifted in the last twenty years. From 1952 to 1963 white enrollments advanced an average of 9 percent a year while black enrollments increased only 6 percent annually. Since 1963 the white rate has increased but black attendance has accelerated even more. The difference is mostly associated with the progress of desegregation in predominantly white colleges and universities during these last 10 years.

Percent in College by Family Income Levels, U.S.



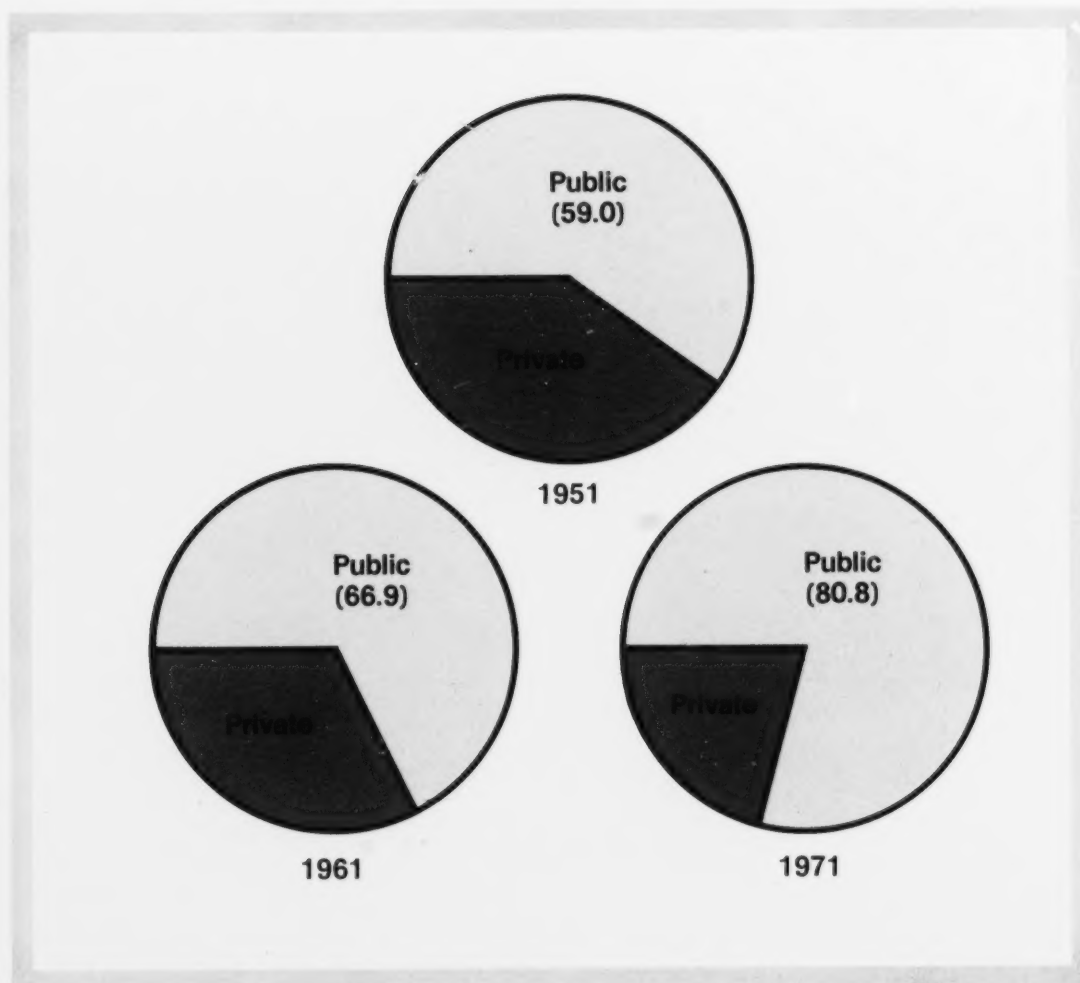
Two more ways of looking at the enrollment composition are by family income levels and by academic aptitude. In 1960 the college attendance rate was 53 percent among young people from the top half in family income and 29 percent among those from the lower half; the corresponding rates today are 60 percent and 39 percent, a sizably larger increase in college attendance by people of less than average income. This undoubtedly reflects the increasing role of student financial assistance in making college possible for lower income groups.

Percent in College, by Aptitude Levels, U.S.



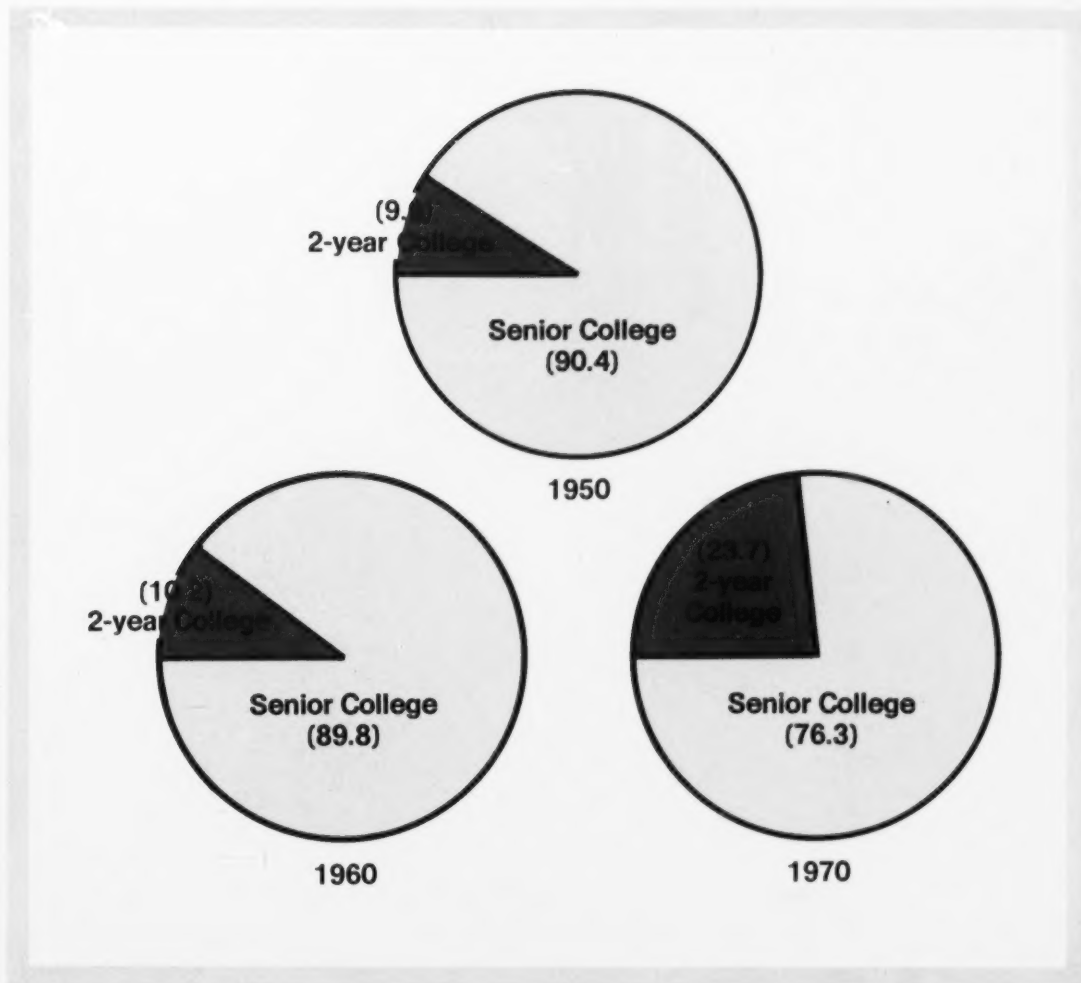
Again dividing the population into halves, this time by academic aptitude levels, the attendance increase of the 60's benefitted the talented more than the less talented. For the brighter half of the population, attendance rates jumped 17 percent over ten years but for those below average aptitude they advanced only 7 percent. The prevailing educational philosophy of the 50's would justify this by defining college as an experience for those who can "benefit most" from it and assumed that the most talented will benefit the most. A growing conviction today holds that some form of postsecondary education is more urgently needed by those below the average in talent than by those above the average.

Enrollment by Institutional Control, South



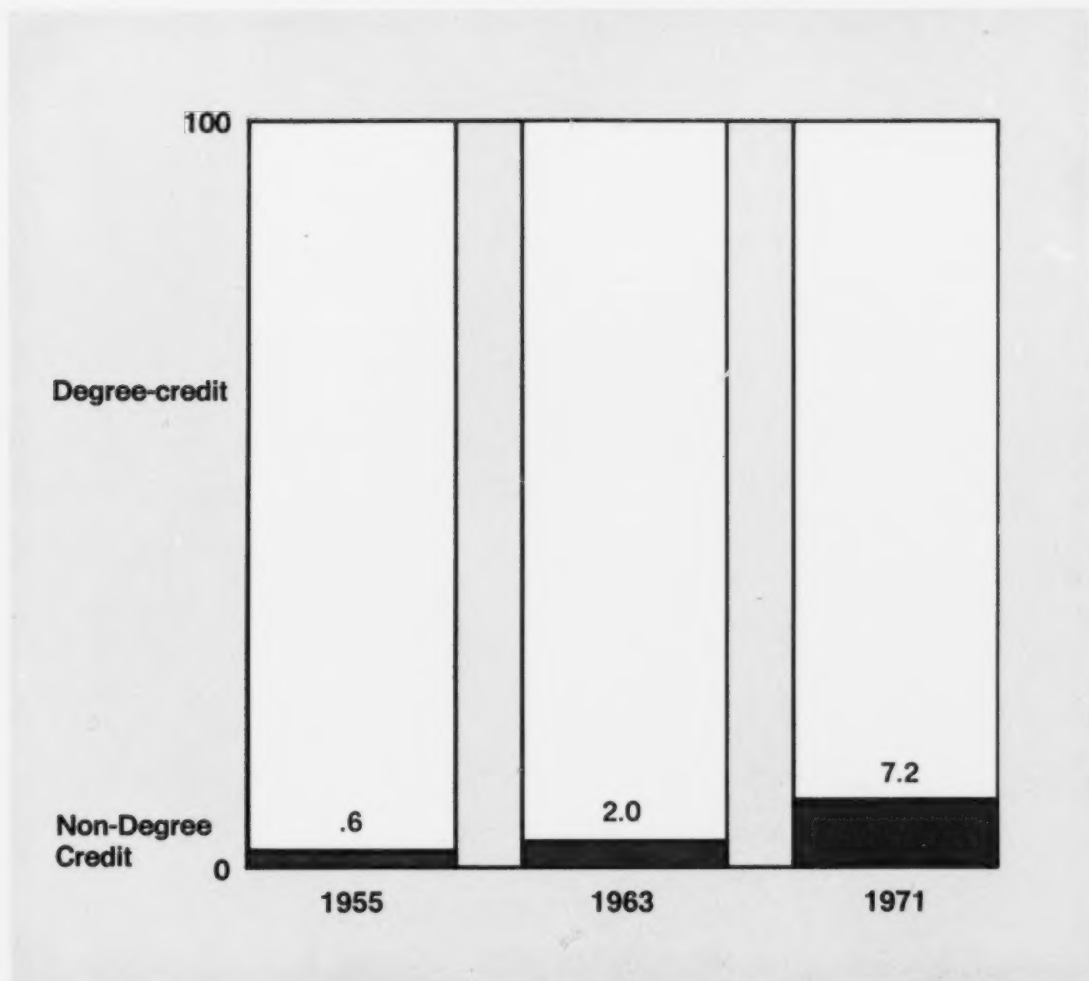
What about the institutions and programs which students attend? One of the most obvious changes is the shift from privately controlled to publicly controlled institutions. Starting with 59 percent of Southern enrollment at public colleges and universities in 1951, the last 20 years have seen the public sector grow to 81 percent of the total.

Enrollment by Institutional Type, South



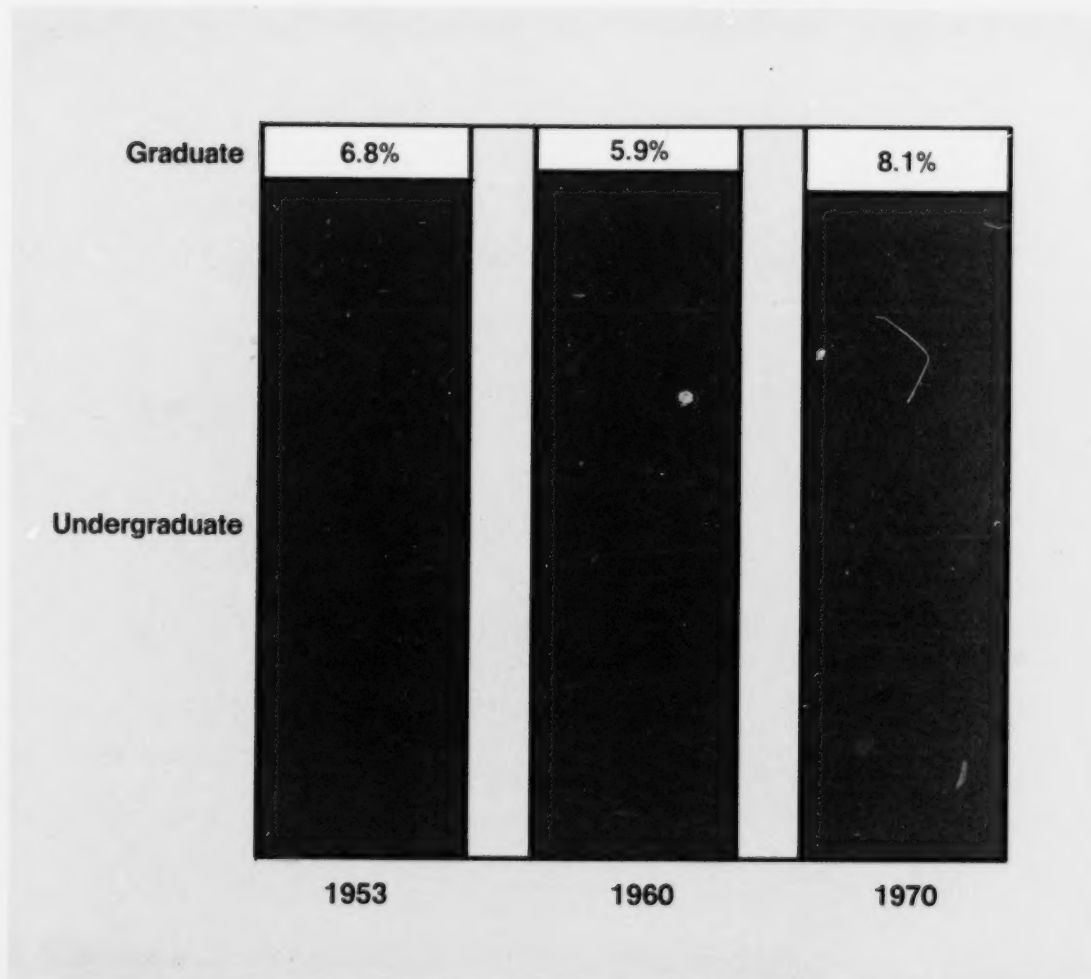
Much of the growth of the public sector has been accounted for by growth of the two-year community colleges. Slowly gaining momentum during the 1950's, the last decade has seen this movement reach a point where one out of every four college students in the South, (public or private) is at a two-year college.

Enrollment, Degree Credit and Terminal-Occupational, South



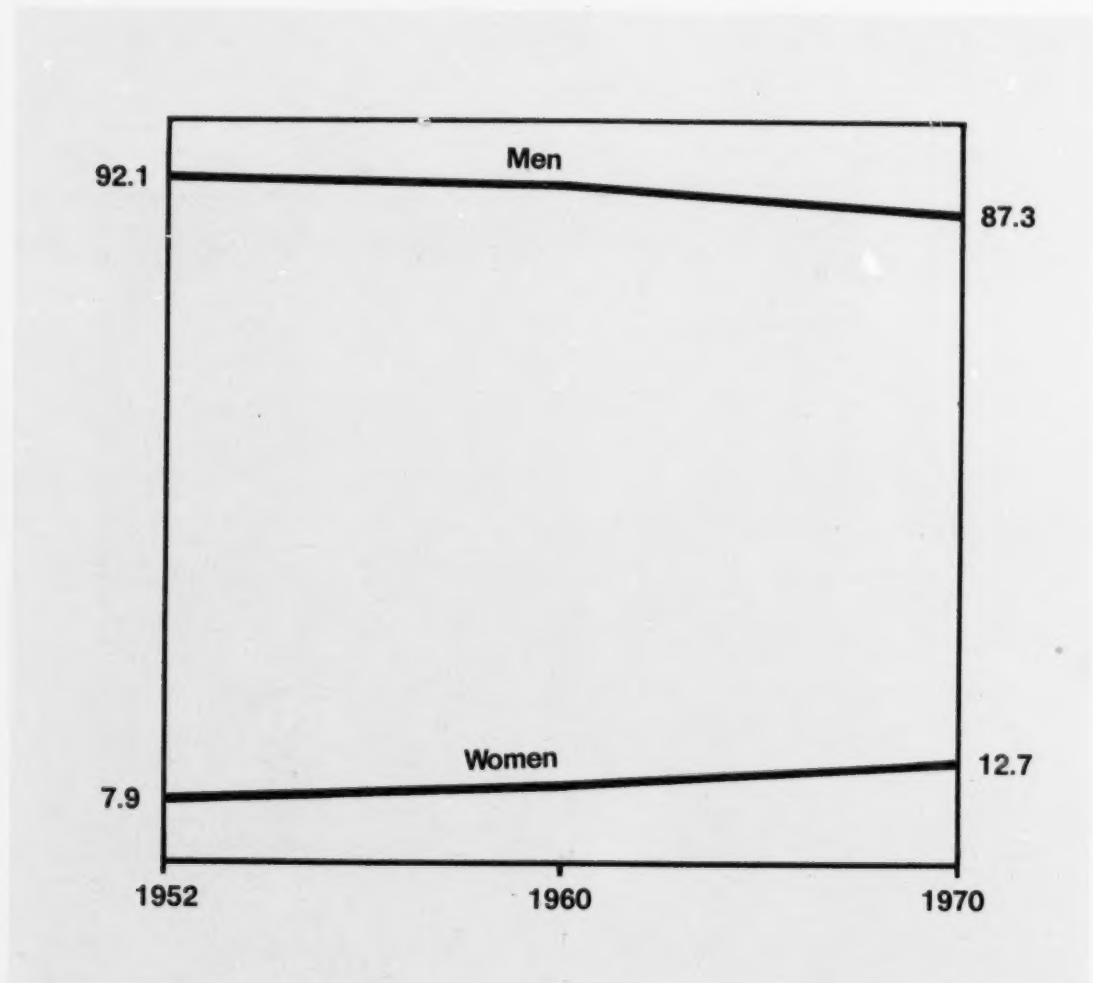
While many of the 2-year students eventually transfer to senior colleges, the community college has been a major factor in loosening the traditional concept that four years of college provides the only option to no education beyond high school at all. Terminal-occupational enrollment at higher educational institutions has grown from six-tenths of one percent in 1955 to 7.2 percent in 1971, a 40-fold increase while degree credit enrollment increased four times.

Enrollment Percent Graduate and Undergraduate, South



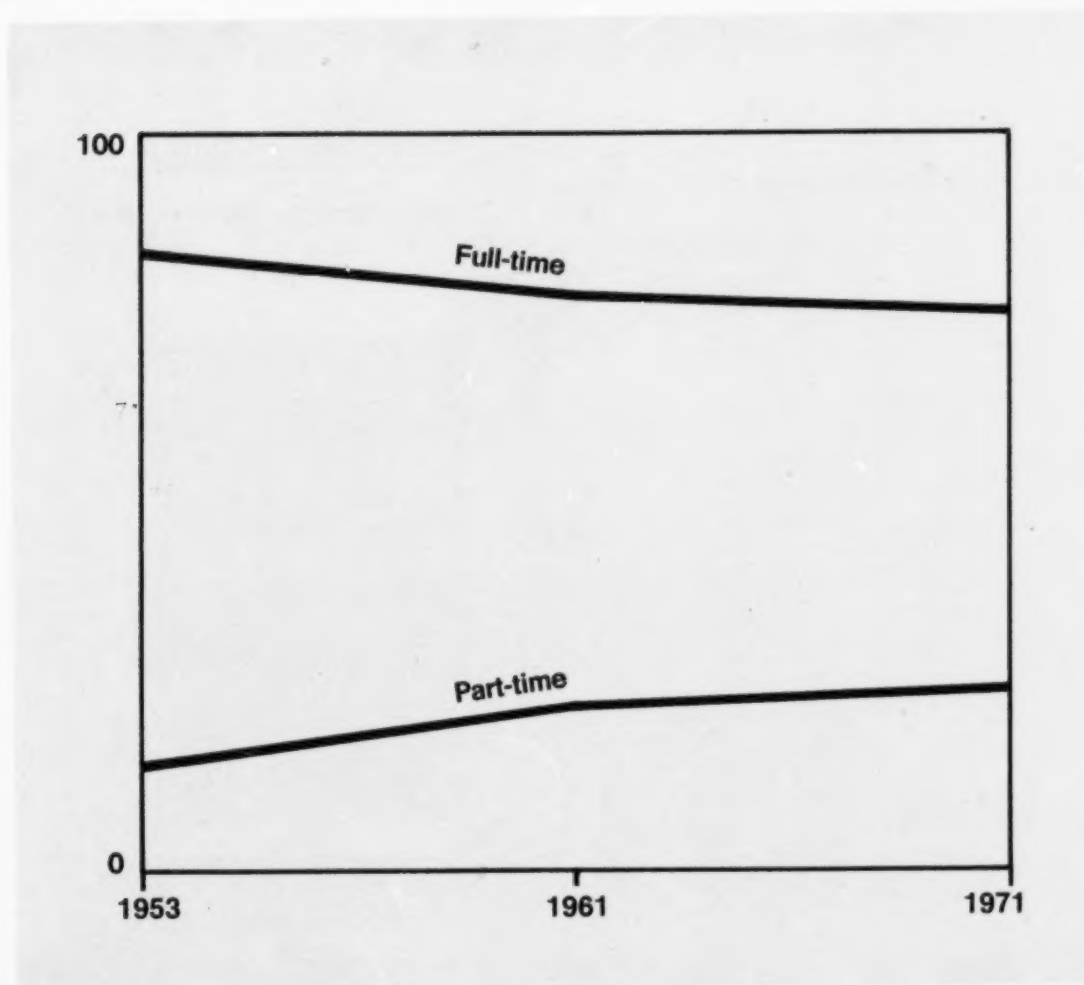
Among those enrolled for degrees, the number studying at the graduate level was high during the early 1950's owing to the tremendous influx of World War II veterans under the G.I. Bill of Rights, many of whom already had bachelor's degrees. The 1953 level of 6.8 percent graduate enrollments was not reached again until the mid-60's and 1970 brought a new peak of 8.1 percent.

Percent of Doctorates, by Sex, South



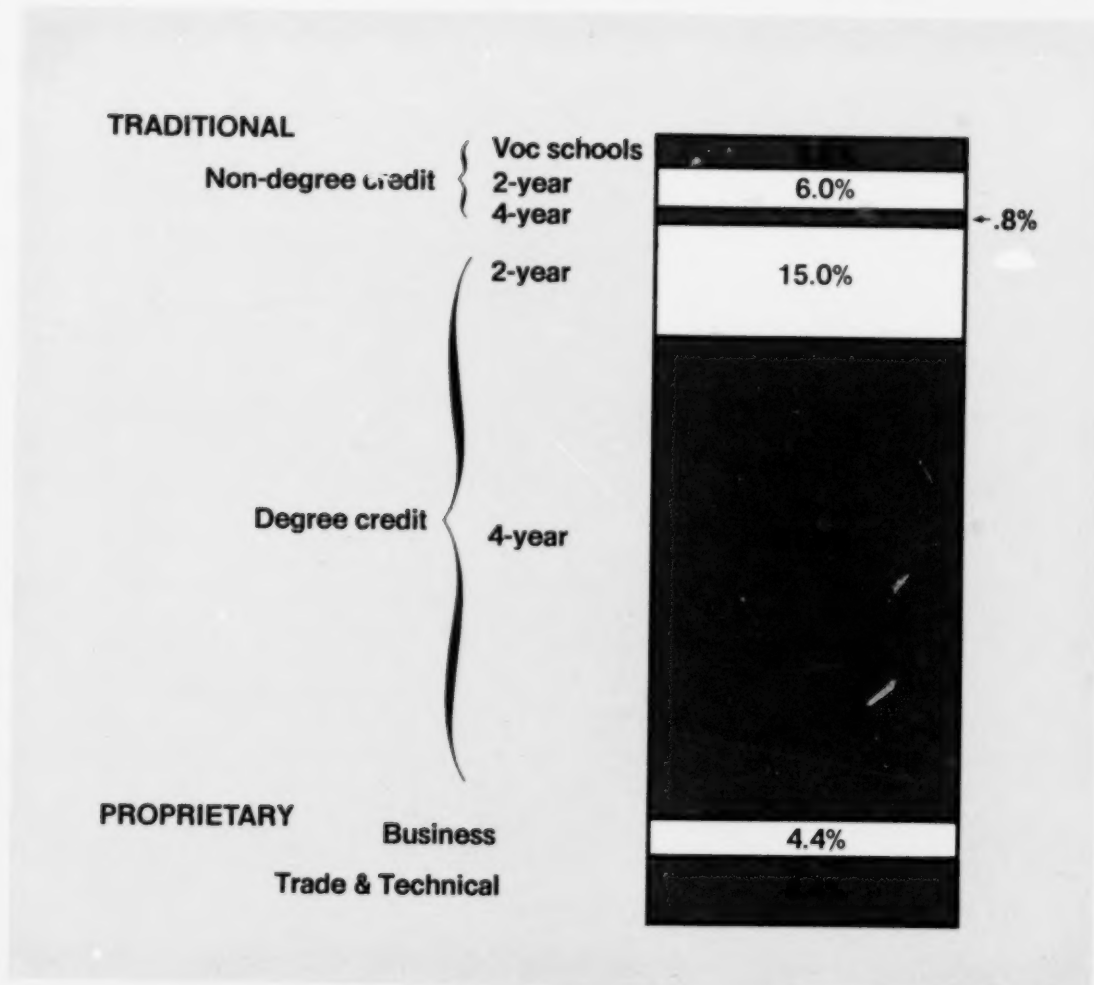
The proportion of women pursuing education to the doctorate level climbed during the entire period, moving from 8 percent of all doctorates in 1952 to 13 percent in 1970.

Degree-Credit Enrollment, Percent Full-time and Part-time, South



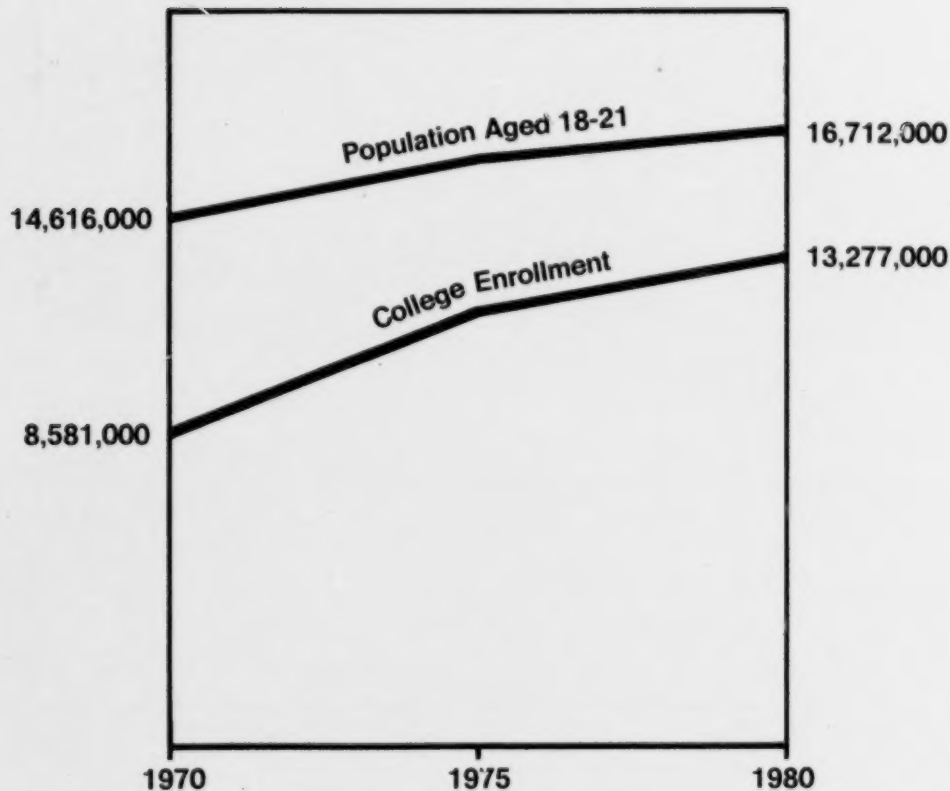
Another dimension of the postsecondary experience concerns duration. College has traditionally been thought of as a full-time responsibility for nine months of the year, but today it is customary for more and more students to enroll in college part-time, usually in combination with an employment experience. In 1971, 23 percent of Southern college students were in part-time attendance.

Postsecondary Education in U.S., 1970



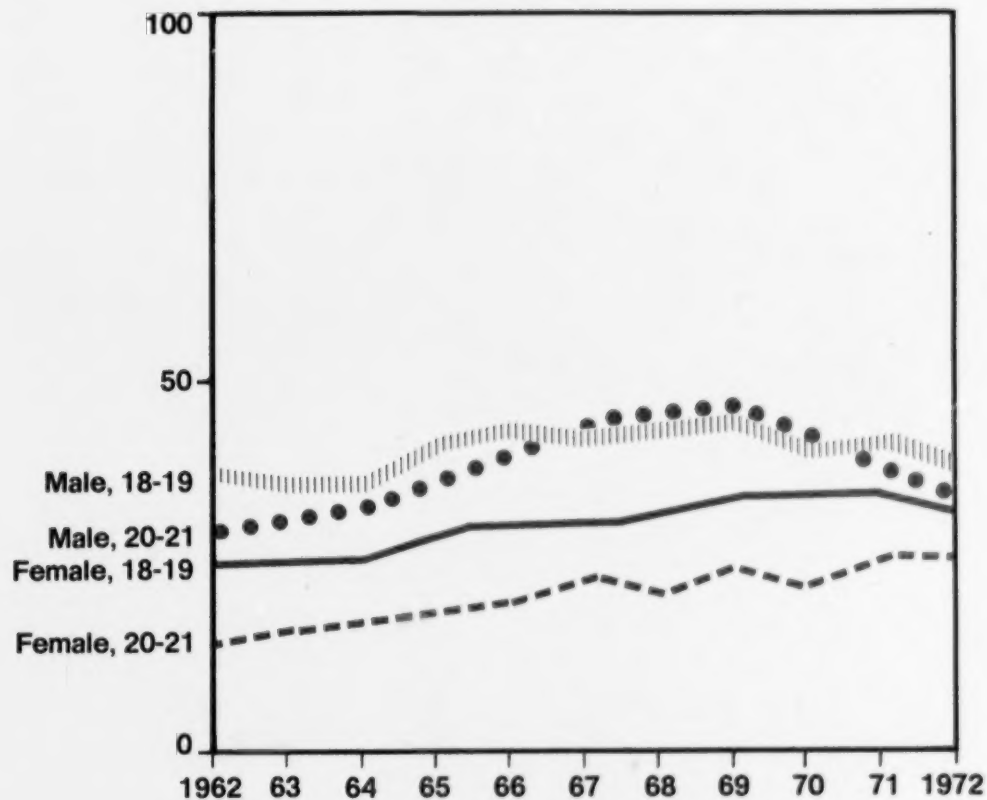
The fact that a major role in postsecondary training in the United States is played by the proprietary institutions has only recently been recognized. This paper defines postsecondary education to include proprietary schools (except for barber and cosmetology schools) and to include vocational education (except for manpower retraining). Out of 100 students enrolled in some form of postsecondary education thus defined, it is estimated that 62 are pursuing a degree-credit program at a four-year college, 15 are pursuing a degree-credit program at a two-year college, 1 is pursuing a non-degree credit program at a four year college, 6 are in a non-degree program at a two-year college, 4 are at a vocational school, 8 are at a trade or technical proprietary school and 4 are at a proprietary business school. Proprietary schools include both degree-credit and non-degree credit enrollment.

Population Aged 18-21 and College Enrollment, U.S.



What is the outlook for the future pattern of enrollments? According to U.S. Office of Education projections, the 1972 level of 9,204,000 college students will rise to 13,277,000 by 1980. According to the Bureau of Census, the 18 to 21 year old population of 14,417,000 (1972) will rise to 16,712,000 in 1980, bringing college enrollment as a percent of the 18 to 21 year old population to 79.4 percent. The long-time educator's practice of expressing enrollments as a percent of the 18 to 21 year old so-called "college age population" has made it necessary to continue citing this measure in making long term comparisons. It is a practice which may soon be shed because 18 to 21 year olds no longer make up the great bulk of college attendance. Of 1972's 9,204,000 college students, only 52 percent were in the 18 to 21 year age group.

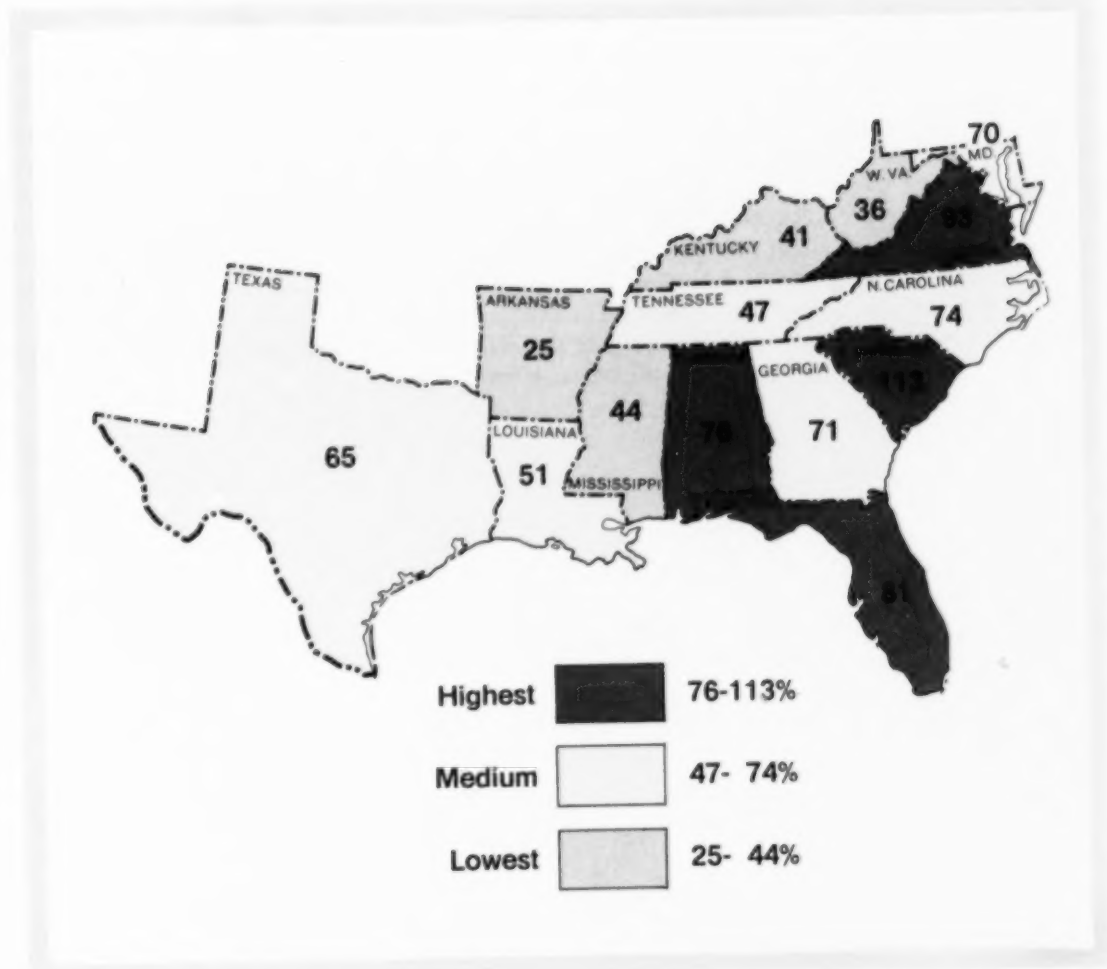
College Enrollment Rates by Age and Sex, U.S., 1962-1972



Colleges and universities do not compile information on the age of students but the U.S. Bureau of Census does. Their statistics show that the college attendance rate of 18 to 21 year olds actually peaked four years ago. For 18 to 19 year old males the rate in 1972 was 37.6 compared with an almost identical rate ten years earlier—37.7. Even females, who show a significant increase over the decade, have leveled off during the last several years.

The U.S. Office of Education has projected 13.3 million students for the United States in 1980. In the latest SREB Factbook on Higher Education in the South it is forecast that the region will account for 23.9 percent of 13.3 million in 1980, which would mean a regional increase of almost one million students.

Percent Increase in Enrollment of College Students, 1965-1972



For one thing, the South still has some catching up to do with the nation in attendance rates of 18 to 21 year olds, and some states are trying hard. For example, the state with the most spectacular recent enrollment growth in the region (South Carolina) is the state which still had the lowest attendance rate in 1970. But a very large part of the increase, whatever it finally turns out to be, will come from shifts in enrollment patterns which are already being experienced.

A look at the future, based on current indicators, may be summed up as follows:

Women are enrolling in greater numbers and remaining in college longer. Blacks are viewing higher education as the path to upward mobility. It has been estimated that 60 percent of the "new" students in the next ten years will come from the half of the population with lower family income and a lower level of academic aptitude. Public enrollments, particularly at community colleges, may be expected to increase more rapidly than private. Part-time enrollments are increasing faster than full-time enrollments. The pattern of interrupted attendance may be expected to grow, with increasing percentages of older students contributing to the total. The range of postsecondary options, including programs of the proprietary schools, will continue to increase. In brief, the face of postsecondary education is changing and, in changing, it is also growing in new directions. To guarantee that the new patterns of growth make for improved adaptation to society's changing needs should be a major goal.